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Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005

Note by the Secretariat

1. The proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 are currently under preparation by the Secretariat. In its resolution 53/207, the General Assembly approved revisions to the rules and regulations governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation (PPBME), as recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination. The attention of the Commission for Social Development is drawn to the following parts of the revised PPBME regulations dealing with the medium-term plan:

> "Regulation 3: The medium-term plan shall be a translation of legislative mandates into programmes and subprogrammes. Its objectives and strategies shall be derived from the policy orientations and goals set by the intergovernmental organs. It shall clearly reflect Member States' priorities as set out in legislation adopted by functional and regional intergovernmental bodies within their spheres of competence and by the General Assembly, on advice from the Committee for Programme and Coordination.
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> "Regulation 8: The programmes and subprogrammes of the proposed medium-term plan shall be reviewed by the sectoral, functional and regional intergovernmental bodies, if possible during the regular cycle of their meetings, prior to their review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions shall consider the proposed medium-term plan in accordance with their terms of reference.
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> "Regulation 15: Specialized intergovernmental bodies and expert bodies, when reviewing the relevant programmes of the medium-term plan within their sphere of competence, shall refrain from establishing priorities that are not consistent with the overall priorities established in the medium-term plan."

2. The present note contains the overall narrative of the draft medium-term plan of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the draft narrative of the subprogramme on social policy and development and the main legislative mandates for the subprogramme adopted by the relevant intergovernmental organs. The

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Commission is invited to review, comment and make recommendations, as appropriate, on the draft narrative of the subprogramme.

Programme 7 (Economic and social affairs)

3. The overall orientation of the programme is to strengthen international economic and social cooperation and to promote development in a rapidly globalizing world, with deepening interdependence among nations. The acceleration of those processes offers opportunities but also carries major risks, which need to be addressed in a comprehensive, inclusive and far-sighted way. The United Nations is in a unique position to address these challenges through international consensus-building that seeks to advance, in a mutually reinforcing way, the interests of all countries, including the requirements and development concerns of countries profoundly affected by the processes under way, but with little capacity individually to influence the powerful tide of forces moving global change.

4. The programme consolidates capacities for analytical and normative work and relevant advisory services and technical cooperation activities. This consolidation positions it favourably to provide effective, integrated support for policy formulation by the concerned intergovernmental bodies and processes and to advance their follow-up at both the global and national levels. Of special importance in this regard is the promotion of policy development on macroeconomic issues, such as those being pursued in the finance for development process; in the General Assembly renewal of dialogue through partnership; in the high-level consideration of economic and social issues in the Economic and Social Council, including the Council's dialogue with the financial and trade institutions; in the continuing policy dialogue in the Assembly and the Council on globalization and interdependence and their implications for development; and in the integrated follow-up to global conferences. The programme also has a special responsibility for coordination, through support for the Council, for Council/ACC interactions and for the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs. This provides a crucial interface between intergovernmentally determined policies and the activities undertaken by the specialized agencies and the operational entities of the United Nations, and serves to promote coherence, and consistency for effective United Nations-wide as well as system-wide responses to key economic and social issues.

5. The programme has the most extensive capacity within the system for economic, social and demographic statistics, including data gathering and analysis on demographic issues, and distinct capacities in the key areas of macroeconomic analysis, sustainable development, social development, public economics and public administration, and gender issues and the advancement of women. These capacities relate to the collection and analysis of information, policy analysis and formulation, as well as advisory services and technical cooperation. These integrated capacities, cross-fertilized through interactions within and among its subprogrammes, facilitate the translation of international agreements into strategies and operational activities at the country level, and feed back lessons learned at the country level into the policy process. The programme will continue to pay particular attention to the overall objective of eradicating poverty, to the special needs of Africa, the least developed countries and the small island developing States and to the promotion of South-South cooperation. The programme will be further guided by the need to empower women through gender mainstreaming, advocacy and the design of policies to achieve relevant targets.

6. The mandates for the programme, which is under the responsibility of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, derive from (a) the Secretariat's responsibility to provide substantive support to the General Assembly, in particular the Second and Third Committees, and the Economic and Social Council and relevant subsidiary bodies; (b) resolutions concerning international cooperation in the economic, social and related fields; and (c) resolutions on operational activities for development, public administration and development, restructuring and revitalization, and relevant aspects of the mandate of the Secretary-General, including his responsibilities as the Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The overall policy framework for the programme is based on the programmes and platforms of action adopted by the General Assembly, such as the International Development Strategy; the Agenda for Development; the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992) and the special session of the General Assembly on its review (1997);

the General Assembly resolution endorsing the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 as a contribution to the overall sustainable development agenda; and the outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (1994) and special session of the General Assembly on its review (1999), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and the special session of the General Assembly on its review (1999), the World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the special session of the General Assembly on its review (2000) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and the special session of the General Assembly on its review (2000).

7. By the end of the period covered by the plan, it is expected that the Department will have accomplished the following:

(a) Contributed to strengthening the role of the Organization in promoting dialogue and consensus for furthering international cooperation in the economic, social, environmental and related fields;

(b) Assisted Member States, through the provision of effective support to standing political processes and relevant ad hoc processes, in the development of more integrated and better coordinated policy responses to development issues and to emerging global problems, including in negotiating global agreements on norms, standards and cooperative action, as well as in enhancing the effectiveness of operational activities for development;

(c) Contributed to a more effective exercise by the central intergovernmental bodies of their coordination functions and assisted the Secretary-General in enhancing coherence and coordination, both within the United Nations and among organizations of the United Nations system;

(d) Promoted a more effective and coordinated implementation of the agreed plans, strategies, programmes or platforms for action, as well as further initiatives in the key areas covered by United Nations conferences/summits and their periodic reviews;

(e) Contributed to better monitoring, analysis and evaluation of global economic and social policies and trends, including population trends; and a more comprehensive framework of projections, and thus enhanced the United Nations capacity to identify and address key development issues; promoted a more effective mainstreaming of gender issues and monitoring of advancement and empowerment of women; enabled a better understanding of the role of the state and the public sector in development; and facilitated the formulation and monitoring of development strategies and goals at the international, regional, subregional and national levels, through wider dissemination of analytical statistical data and economic and social indicators and enhanced analytical work;

(f) Supported the efforts of Governments in formulating development strategies and assisted them in building their national capacities, at their request and in accordance with their national policies, in relevant economic, social policy and sustainable development fields, including statistics, gender issues and advancement of women, public administration and finance, and natural resources and energy management, through the provision of more effective advisory services, supplemented by research and training;

(g) Contributed to strengthening the human, institutional and policy development capabilities of Member States, in particular by bolstering, whenever appropriate, South-South cooperation, taking into account the outcomes and commitments of relevant United Nations conferences and relevant decisions by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant intergovernmental bodies in this regard;

(h) Facilitated linkages between the United Nations and civil society, within the framework of relevant mandates, and developed innovative means of cooperation and modes of partnership in areas of common interest.

Subprogramme 7.3 (Social policy and development)

8. The subprogramme will seek to strengthen international cooperation for social development, with particular attention to the three core issues of poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration, in the context of the comprehensive and detailed framework of commitments and policies for action by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations provided by the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development; the outcome of the special session

of the General Assembly to be held in June 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and to consider further actions and initiatives; and decisions taken by the Commission for Social Development.

9. By the end of the plan period, the subprogramme is expected to have:

(a) Further assisted Governments and other actors in achieving implementation of commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives adopted at the special session of the General Assembly, by advancing common norms, policies and cooperative action and developing integrated approaches, with particular emphasis on the need to strengthen social cohesion, in policies for eradicating poverty and achieving full employment;

(b) Provided support to Member States in achieving the goal of eradicating absolute poverty and reducing overall poverty substantially in the world through decisive national action and international cooperation in the context of the objectives of the Summit; and identified further initiatives on the basis of an assessment and appraisal of the implementation of measures, recommendations and activities related to the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006);

(c) Assisted the international community in responding to long-term and emerging issues in socio-economic development, through monitoring of socio-economic trends, identification of pertinent issues and analysis of their implications for policy at the national and international levels;

(d) Contributed to increasing the technical and institutional capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to formulate and implement effective social policies and programmes contributing to economic growth and sustainable development; and to supporting socio-economic aspects of development, including reconstruction and rehabilitation processes in post-conflict situations, through the provision, at the request of Governments, of advisory services and relevant technical cooperation activities, including training;

(e) Assisted Governments and the global community in furthering the implementation of the major international policy documents on ageing, including the International Plan of Action on Ageing, through its revisions and updates and by developing a long-term strategy on ageing for the twenty-first century; facilitated access to information on ageing through the development of an Internet-accessible database of ageing policies; and promoted improved understanding of the implications of lifelong development in terms of strategic options and policy objectives;

(f) Further advanced the implementation of international norms and standards for the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities;

(g) Contributed, through improvements in research, data collection and policy analysis, to enhancing the capacity of Governments for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of family-related policies and programmes;

(h) Contributed to enhancing youth participation in development and peace by promoting internationally agreed youth policies and programmes of action at the global, regional and national levels;

(i) Promoted increasing awareness of instruments in the social development field.

10. The subprogramme will be implemented by the Division for Social Policy and Development.

Annex

Legislative mandates

Subprogramme 7.3 (Social policy and development)

General Assembly resolutions

47/5	Proclamation on ageing
49/153	Towards full integration of persons with disabilities in society: implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and of the Long-Term Strategy to Implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond
50/81	World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond
50/107	Observance of the International Year of the Eradication of Poverty and proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty
50/119	Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries and a United Nations conference on South-South cooperation
50/120	Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
50/142	Follow-up to the International Year of the Family
50/144	Towards full integration of persons with disabilities in society: implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and of the Long-Term Strategy to Implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond
50/161	Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development
51/202	Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development
52/25	Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development
52/81	Follow-up to the International Year of the Family
52/82	Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: towards a society for all in the twenty-first century

53/28	Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development
53/109	International Year of Older Persons, 1999
54/120	Policies and programmes involving Youth
54/232	Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty
54/124	Follow-up to the International Year of the Family
54/23	Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development
54/24	Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Society for All Ages

Economic and Social Council resolutions

1996/7	Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the future role of the Commission for Social Development
1997/55	Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, including a World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions

1996/1	Coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication